

nantwich farm vets



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24hr phone line: 01270 610349

October 2016

Dates for your diary

4th – 6th
October

3 day AI Course

We will be running another course at the end of the month. Contact Michael for more information

9th
December

Farm client Christmas party

Worleston village hall

We are planning on holding another **Dairyland foot trimming course** in the near future. Please speak to Steve if you are interested.



UK Dairy Day 2016

Congratulations to all of our clients who showed at Dairy Day in Telford last month. What an amazing day! The show had a real buzz about it and everyone there was feeling positive about the future of the dairy industry. Special congratulations go to A&J Whittaker, I&G Jones who had Holstein Champion with Knowlesmere Goldwyn Abrakaboom, J & N Hudson & B Ford who had Jersey champion with Honeyfields Tequila Lets Dance, R Morgan & R Stockton who had Shorthorn champion with Westonia Gay Lass 5 and Woodhey Dairys Ltd who had reserve champion with Woodhey Arianna.



Reminder: Action Johnes's Disease

Most milk processors have signed up to the Action Johnes initiative. This means that you should have decided with your vet which one of the six different control strategies you can undertake on your farm by the end of this month. If you haven't please speak to Liz or visit www.actionjohnesuk.org



It is well known that a cow that has a case of mastitis has reduced fertility, whether the mastitis case occurs before or after insemination. This is no surprise when you picture a sick cow with high temperature and off her feed; however had you considered that even mild to moderate cases of mastitis also have negative effects on reproduction?

Work has shown that mild cases of mastitis or even raised somatic cell counts result in reduction in fertility. Infertility or failure to conceive are the major causes of culling in dairy cows, when times are tight looking at ways to reduce these losses is essential. Clearly the focus is on preventing mastitis, but when it cannot be avoided how can we minimise the impact it has on fertility?

In 2009 the MAMMARY study showed for the first time that using Metacam alongside antibiotic treatment for mastitis reduced culling rates, it was suggested that a big part of this might be linked to improved fertility. Recently a new study has been published looking in detail at the reproductive performance of cows that suffer a

case of mastitis and asking whether using Metacam, as part of your mastitis treatment protocol, can make a difference to fertility?

The FERTILE study was carried out in six European countries including the UK, looking at over 500 cows with mild to moderate mastitis. Cows were assigned to one of two treatment groups. All cows received two to four tubes of intramammary antibiotic therapy but one group also received Metacam whereas the other received a placebo.

After this treatment, they were then followed to gather all their fertility data such as services and pregnancy diagnosis through to if they were culled in that lactation. Milk samples were also taken before and after treatment to assess cure rates.

Results showed that cows with mastitis that were given Metacam along with antibiotic therapy had significantly improved fertility performance compared to the cows that were given the placebo and antibiotic therapy.

Using Metacam for mastitis

Metacam is commonly used as a painkiller for disbudding or surgery but could it have benefits for use in other areas?



In particular:

- The percentage of cows conceiving to their first service (31% vs 21%)
- The number of AIs required to achieve conception (2.43 vs 2.92)
- Percentage of cows pregnant by 120 days after calving (40% vs 31%)

It was also seen that the cows treated with Metacam had a higher bacteriological cure rate than those that received the placebo (66% vs 50%)

This provides evidence that using Metacam alongside antibiotic treatment of mastitis can bring real economic and welfare benefits.

Could mobility scoring reduce your lameness?

Lameness is still one of the most costly diseases to the UK dairy industry but it's often the one that can be ignored most easily because many of the costs are unseen. When a cow goes lame she only drops her yield by an average of 1kg per day. But when you consider that the average case of lameness in the UK lasts 5 months, and then add this to the negative effects on insemination, pregnancy and culling rates and it can add up to some scary figures.

The most recent costing data suggests the average costs per case for the three most common causes of lameness are:

- **Sole ulcer: £550**
- **White line disease: £330**
- **Digital dermatitis: £75**

Obviously prevention is the best way to ensure that these costs are never realised but every farm has cows going lame so why do we see such a range in the levels of lameness on individual farms?

The key to successful lameness management is prompt treatment. Once cows become obviously lame they have most likely been masking their pain for days or weeks. This is because they are a prey species

and would be eaten in the wild if they showed any signs of weakness.

That means that the cows showing obvious signs of pain e.g. struggling to keep up with the herd or coming in last in the group cannot hide the pain any longer. These cows are what we would class as 'Score 3' cows and are likely to have been lame for some time and have a much reduced chance of cure.

Now none of us need help picking out who those 'Score 3' cows are - you could probably reel me a list off the top of your head! But Score 2 cows that are trying to hide their lameness are the ones that everyone struggles to find. You are very unlikely to spot them during milking or at times when you have another job to do.

If I compare lameness to mastitis....if a cow comes in with mastitis and you ignore it for a month it will probably turn into an abscess in her udder and be very difficult to treat. The same is true for lameness...the longer you leave a lame cow untreated the harder it will be to get her sound again. So the key is to find those early cases of lameness and treat them quickly to get them back to normal ASAP.

What's the best way to do this? There are several technologies on the market and in development that can aid your lameness detection using activity sensors or plate force meters. However, these are expensive and tend to be fraught with issues because every cow walks differently.

Currently the best tool we have is the human eye! Many of you have been performing your own mobility scoring quarterly as required by your supermarket contract. That is fine for monitoring how well you are doing with lameness but will not help with speed of detection, as it isn't frequent enough to prevent those 'score 2's' from becoming 'score 3's'

Our vet technicians can provide a fortnightly or monthly mobility scoring service that takes the hassle out of lameness detection. You will receive a trimming list within 24 hours that identifies cows for the foot trimmer, differentiates new cases from chronics and on-going monitoring will be discussed with your vet to review areas where lameness can be prevented.

Please ring **Jess** on 07921855043 for more info.



Vets Mobile Numbers

Dave Shaw	07836335185
Rob George	07773384450
John Manson	07813690860
John Yarwood	07814879109
Colin Baxter	07860605079
Stuart Russell	07770448179
Peter Duncalfe	07717780604
Laura Donovan	07800647608
Steven Crowe	07891843694
Liz Davies	07767447281
Mike Wilkinson	07866257014
Jake Lawson	07866257014
Amy Cox	07966833870
James Patterson	07774795700

Vet Technician

Jess Tonks	07921855043
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"@NantwichFarmVet"



How can I prevent white line lesions in my herd?

1. Don't rush cows

When moving cows to and from the parlour they should be allowed to amble along at their own pace not 'pushed' by dog or a stick. That way if there are any stones on the track or slippery areas of concrete they will be able to pick their way through them.

2. Collecting yard

There should be a minimum area of 1.8m² per cow in the collecting yard to allow them to reorder themselves before entering the parlour. The backing gate should not be used until half the cows have been milked and should never be used to force the cows together so much that they have to raise their heads.

3. Flow in and out of the parlour

If the cows have to make a sharp turn, go up/down steps or down a slope this can cause foot damage. In fact when doing a mobility score you can often predict which way the cows have to turn out of the parlour from the levels of lameness on the back right or back left foot. Put rubber matting on these areas to reduce the risk of damage occurring.

4. Cow tracks

Make sure tracks don't have sharp stones and are at least 2.5 metres wide. **Astroturf** is a brilliant surface for cows to walk on, cheap and hardwearing.